Government for working out a rehabilitation package for revival of sick but viable small scale units.

(8) Financial assistance in the form of long term equity type assistance upto Rs. 1,50,000/- to units with a project cost not exceeding Rs. 10 lakhs at a nominal service charge of one per cent per annum is also available to potentially viable but sick small scale industrial units from the National Equity Fund set up in August, 1987.

(9) The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has been established to function as an Apex Bank for tiny and small scale industries.

A separate Refinance Scheme for Rehabilitation (RSR) is being managed by SIDBI for revival of potentially viable but sick small scale industrial units.

Formulation of National Renewable Energy Policy

*251. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to conduct a policy analysis and form a development cell to facilitate formulation of national renewable energy policy and a statutory Act on the subject;

(b) whether it is a fact that the generation cost of conventional power is on the rise and that of renewable energy on the decline and if so, how soon the commercial viability of renewable energy project will be at par with those of conventional energy; and

(c) whether Government would introduce regulatory measures by insisting on the use of solar energy for water-heating by making it mandatory and what are the other measures envisaged to conserve energy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) and (b) In order to realise the full potential of renewable energy sources by systematic and sustained measures, Government proposes to formulate a comprehensive renewable energy policy which will help to create awareness, foster technology development and demonstration, accelerate commercialisation. The policy formulation exercise will be carried out by the Ministry with available assistance from outside experts as and when required.

The cost of conventional power has been increasing. The costs of renewable energy systems would be coming down with advances in technologies, increase in demand and volume of production. Technologies, for power generation from wind canal based small hydro, biomass cogeneration are becoming competitive in comparison with new conventional power projects. Further development efforts are under way to improve performance and to achieve cost reduction in respect of other potential technologies through the involvement of Research & Development establishments and industry.

However, commercial viability of renewable energy vis-a-vis conventional energy would be established only if new criteria are adopted for cost comparisons, which need to take into account various factors such as costs and hidden subsidies for exploration, mining and transportation of fossil fuels used for the generation of conventional power, alongwith the environmental and health benefits of renewable energy. A proper basis for comparison of renewable energy projects with conventional energy projects would be one of the key features in the proposed renewable policy.

(c) Based on the recommendations of a group constituted by the Government on "Installation of Solar Assisted water heating systems in functional buildings", and the Third Conference of Chief Ministers/Ministers of Non-Conventional Energy held in September, 1994 State Governments have been requested to consider issuing directives to local bodies

under their control for modifying building bye-laws to provide mandatory installation of solar water heating systems in respect of hotels and hospitals in the commercial sector. A few State Governments have already taken action in this regard, and some other States are considering the same. The Government have also directed the CPWD for drawing up an action plan to implement the recommendations in the Central Government sector also. Consideration is also being given to formulation of a suitable legal framework for mandatory use of renewable energy for certain applications.

News-Item Captioned "Patenting Ayurveda's Extinction"

*252. SHRI SOM PAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "Patenting ayurveda's extinction" published in the "Indian Express" dated the 21st January, 1995; and

(b) if so, what steps are contemplated to check the phenomenon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C. SILVERA): (a) and (b) The Government is aware of the news item "Patenting Ayurveda's Extinction" published in the Indian Express. This item has been published on 21st February, 1995 and not on 21st January, 1995. The news item has raised two main points:

(i) Patent Law and its application in the production of Ayurvedic drugs;

(ii) Standardisation of drugs and quality control.

As per the Patent Act, 1970, medicinal plants and herbs by themselves are not patentable. However, patent is granted to any process after examining the innovativeness, usefulness and commercial exploitability. Patents are granted only for the process of manufacturing and not for the medicinal plants and herbs as a whole. It implies thereby that the use of medicinal plants and herbs for preparing Ayurvedic medicines cannot be restricted under the Patent Act, 1970.

Drug standardisation and quality control have received attention of the Government. Under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, adulteration of Ayurvedic drugs has already been declared as an offence. Government is encouraging cultivation of medicinal plants. Pharmacopoeial Committee and testing laboratory have been established and strengthening of drug testing facilities is envisaged in the plan.

Power Generation from Municipal Waste

*253. SHRI HIPHEI:
MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Dutch Company, namely 'Seghers' has offered expertise to generate power from Municipal wastes;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether our country is facing the problem of power shortage;

(d) whether the country is also facing the problems of disposal of Municipal wastes;

(e) whether Government propose to take some initiatives on the offers of the above company of Holland in view of the above situation; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) and (b) No Sir. However a Bangalore based Indian firm (M/s. Amith & Nitin Impex) having